# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JUNE 2005

TWO DOLLARS

# Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

In the December 2004 Director's Column, I spoke with you about the creation of the Department's new state certified Law Enforcement Training Academy for game warden recruits. As stated, this effort was truly a "new beginning" for our Department.

On April 7, 2005 this "new beginning" came to fruition as the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries swore-in the first graduates from the Academy. Each new recruit, 15 men and one woman, endured an extremely competitive hiring process that not only tested their character, but also their patience and endurance. Each had to successfully complete a 33-week training period that tested physical, mental and emotional strength.

The Academy training offered an ideal blend of natural resource law enforcement and general law enforcement that included courses of instruction that addressed 1,351 Department of Criminal Justice Services mandated training objectives and met 249 Department of Criminal Justice Services performance outcomes. The Academy also utilized 71 game warden instructors, 40 instructors from other divisions within the Department, and 12 instructors from other local, state and federal agencies to accomplish the instruction of all of these courses, training objectives and performance outcomes.

Now don't get the wrong impression and think that becoming a game warden simply happens by sitting in a classroom, reading books and taking written tests. There is also a barrage of hands-on training that is unique to the job. The driving course alone includes 80 hours training in how to effectively operate patrol vehicles in both emergency and non-emergency situations, in on-road and off-road environments. They also learn how to safely and effectively operate All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and an array of watercraft, including everything from kayaks to larger patrol boats. Wardens also have to endure specialized training, such as Tactical Man-Tracking, Officer Survival, Hunter Education Instructor, Mountain Biking, Waterfowl ID, specialized enforcement and many other topical areas.

Being a game warden is very much a unique occupation. In fact, being a game warden is not just a job—it's a way of life. In other professions you take off your "work hat" when you get home. A game warden is always wearing that "work hat." When they go to town, they are often known as "The Game Warden." When attending church or civic activities, they are easily identified as "The Game Warden." Wardens must have a genuine understanding of this to be effective in their assigned county. They will get calls at home, and constantly be asked questions while at a ball game, shopping at their local market or while trying to have a quiet dinner out with their family. This is all part of being a game warden.

It was with great pride and honor for me to have addressed this history-making group of new game wardens as they graduated from the Department's first Basic Training Academy. To learn more of what life was like for this group of dedicated individuals, I encourage you to read next months issue of *Virginia Wildlife* and the article "Game Warden Academy." The article is an up-close look at what life was like for the Department's newest wardens during their 33-week training, and was written by one of our newest game wardens, officer Rich Landers. You won't want to miss it.

***Mission Statement***

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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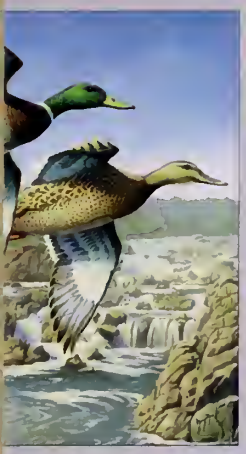

**About the cover:** Seen from the Virginia side of the Potomac River is wildlife artist Rob Leslie's 1998 Virginia Waterfowl print of mallards flying over Great Falls Park. The park is located at the headwaters of the fall line of the Potomac and displays remains of the historic, Patowmack Canal, which allowed boats to navigate around the falls during the 18th century. For more information about Great Falls Park visit http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/grfa/.


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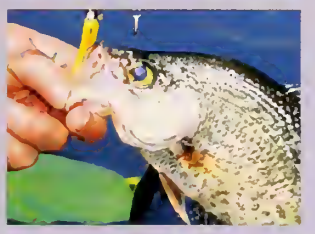


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# Virginia's Potc

Often referred to as "the Nation's River" the Potomac has played an important role in the history of the Old Dominion.

*Captain John Smith, on behalf of the Royal Virginia Company, explored and fished the Potomac in 1608. (The Library of Virginio)*

©Dwight Dyke

*Far left: This early map of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay region was published in 1719 by John Senex, a skilled cartographer and engraver of the time. (The Library of Virginia)*
*Above: George Washington's Patowmac Company built a canal to go around the Great Falls to allow commercial boat transport of goods between the upper Potomac and tidewater. Washington's vision that the Potomac River would become a grand commercial artery never materialized. However, Washington's influence to place the nation's capital on the Potomac has had a much more profound influence on the Potomac Valley.*

# mac

by Bruce A. Lemmert

William Byrd, one of the foremost colonial authors and an important figure in the establishment of Virginia once remarked; "In the beginning, all America was Virginia." It does seem preposterous today, that virtually a whole continent, one already occupied at that, could be claimed simply by planting a flag. Indeed England's claim to the North American continent rested on John Cabot's 1497 voyage, making him the "first" to touch the mainland. Still, Byrd's assertion was not that much of a stretch. The Virginia Charter was revised in 1609 to include all the land two hundred miles north and two hundred miles south from Point Comfort, extending "west and northwest " from sea to sea, including all islands within one hundred miles of either coast."

England's Virgin Queen honored the new land with her name, Virginia. It was a slow start. Not until 1584 did the English take a serious stab at establishing a settlement on the new shore. Sir Walter Raleigh's Letters Patent entitled him *"to discover search fynde out and viewe such remote heathen and barbarus landes Contries and territories not actually possessed of any Christian Prynce."*

As you know, Sir Walter's venture mysteriously failed and this set the stage for the Royal Virginia Company venture of 1607 led by Captain Christopher Newport on the flagship Susan Constant. The stockholders of the Virginia Company were naturally interested in profits, but the Royal Charter included an expectation of "redemption of souls."

Claiming a continent was one thing, but holding a continent was

*Captain John Smith's map of Virginia was first published in Oxford, England, in 1612. It was one of the first recorded documents of its kind that offered a look at the "New World." (The Library of Virginia)*

quite another. The Spanish, Portuguese, French and Dutch were not sitting idly by. Chief Powhatan and his cohorts also had other ideas. The Virginia Company's Jamestown was a thin and precarious thread anchoring England's claim. This thread came close to severing on more than one occasion.

Captain John Smith was a bold and resourceful man, and it is in no small part to Smith's credit that early Jamestown did hold on. A year after the arrival in Virginia, Smith led a 14 man crew on an exploratory expedition up the Chesapeake, and on June 16, 1608, they entered the mouth of the Potomac, which they estimated to be seven miles across. Smith's records indicate that they explored and mapped the Potomac as far as they could. This was presumably to Little Falls above Anacostia.

Likely to the chagrin of the Virginia Company stockholders, Smith found no evidence of gold in the Potomac River Valley. The Potomac was also not to be a northwest passage. Smith noted that the Piscataway Indians on the Potomac seemed to be much more friendly than the sometimes surly and unpredictable Powhatans to the south. The Virginians traded for venison, bear meat and corn with the Piscataway Indians. Smith's crew caught fish in abundance. Smith noted, *"...neither better fish, more plenty, nor more variety for small fish, had any euer seene in any place so swimming in the water"*. Smith traded for beaver, otter, bear, marten and other furs.

In 1632, Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, became heir to the Maryland Charter, granted by King Charles I, successor to King James. The Maryland charter was the fruit of Cecil Calvert's father, George. George Calvert, First Lord Baltimore, had tried to establish a settlement in Newfoundland, but found the climate too cold and the soil too rocky. George Calvert was a shareholder in the Virginia Company, so he was familiar with that land. The Baron of Baltimore did some kingly "arm twisting" to secure the Maryland grant, totally within the charter of Virginia. Instead of separating Maryland from Virginia at the middle of the "River Patowmack", Charles I called for the dividing line to be the farther bank of said river and following it.

In February 1634 when Calvert's the Ark and the Dove dropped anchor at Jamestown, they faced a somewhat cool reception. Not only did the Virginians see the Maryland claim to be a usurpation of their own

*On his trip up the Potomac River Captain John Smith documented numerous Native American villages and buildings lining both shores below the falls. (The Library of Virginia)*

land claims, the Calverts were also Catholics. In 1629, George Calvert, on an exploratory visit to Jamestown was asked by the Virginians to take the Oath of Supremacy (to recognize the ultimate authority of the king in English ecclesiastical affairs). Calvert promptly left and returned to England. The Virginians were under instructions from the King to give friendly aid, but other than the Virginia Governor, John Harvey, the King's directive was largely ignored.

The stage was just about set. Enter Thomas Lord Culpeper, Baron of Thoresway. Culpeper officially became Governor of Virginia in 1677. Nearly three years later, the King had to order Culpeper to leave England and actually go to Virginia and govern. Most Virginians, as it turned out, would have preferred that Culpeper stay in England. Governor Culpeper had little concern for the actual welfare of Virginians but was more concerned with his own pecuniary interests. He was thought by many to be a dilettante and a scalawag with avaricious intentions. At any rate, in 1688 Culpeper secured a charter from King James II on the Northern Neck that included and overlapped Maryland's claim on the Potomac River, including the islands.[1]

So, in leading up to and after the American Revolution, both Maryland and Virginia claimed and used the Potomac. The conflicting grants naturally lent themselves to controversy between the two states. "The chief problem which concerned Maryland was the practice of the Commonwealth of Virginia to levy tolls upon vessels proceeding to Maryland through the Virginia waters of the Chesapeake".[2]

In the afterglow of the colonies winning independence from England, and prior to the heady work of developing a constitution and naming a first president, Virginia and Maryland officials agreed to meet on matters of the Potomac River. The meeting began on March 20, 1785, in Alexandria, in the midst of a raging, late winter snowstorm. The Virginia delegation was to be represented by George Mason; his friend and neighbor in Fairfax County, Alexander Henderson; James Madison; and Edmund Randolph. Maryland was to send Thomas Stone; Samuel Chase; Washington's friend and neighbor, Thomas Johnson; and Major Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer.

Due to poor communications at the time, only Mason and Henderson represented Virginia. The only Marylander not making the meeting was Thomas Johnson. After four days of meeting in Alexandria, Mason's neighbor, George Washington, graciously invited the group to continue the meeting at Mount Vernon. Four more days of negotiation at General

*From a Kings Grant, Thomas Lord Culpeper would eventually own most of the land that stretched between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, and all the islands within the river or what is now known as the Northern Neck. (The Library of Virginia)*

The Library of Virginia

*George Mason drafted the Virginia Bill of Rights at his library at Gunston, on the Potomac. Mason was central to the Maryland-Virginia Compact of 1785 which guaranteed Virginia's fishing and riparian rights on the Potomac River.*

©Dwight Dyke

*"Life of Washington: The Farmer," shows George Washington on his farm along the Potomac River. (The Library of Virginia) Right: Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington for more than 45 years, was built overlooking the Potomac River.*

Washington's house produced an agreement that is now often referred to as The Maryland, Virginia Compact of 1785 or simply the Compact of 1785.

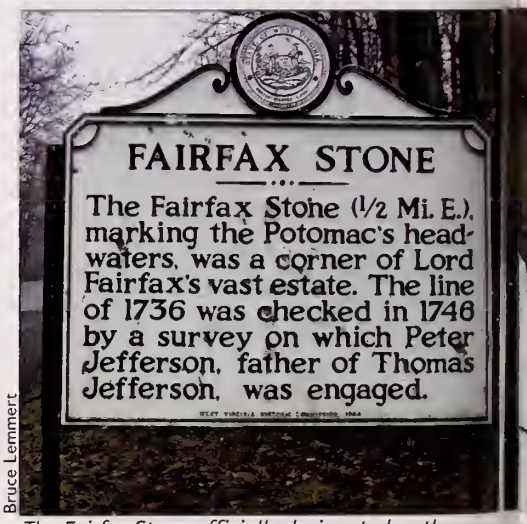
The representatives of Maryland and Virginia met at the Mount Vernon Convention like the neighbors they were. Prior to the revolution, Maryland and Virginia were simply neighboring colonies. During the war the two colonies were allies in cause and force. Now after victory over King George III's troops at Yorktown and at the advent of the adoption of a constitution, Maryland and Virginia were sister states and true neighbors.

Despite the jurisdictional divide between Maryland and Virginia, the Potomac had by 1785, long been a unifying influence on the tidewater communities of the two states. The Potomac Valley was joined by custom, trade, similar agriculture and architectural practices, and by intermarriage. The Mount Vernon Convention was a meeting of friends looking for a win-win agreement. The results were common sense compromises that have served and benefited the citizens of both states for over two hundred years.

Virginians Mason and Henderson quickly conceded to the dropping of tolls on vessels entering the Virginia capes of the Chesapeake to do business in Maryland. The meeting proceeded amicably. The negotiations proceeded to spell out the development and maintenance of navigational aids on the waters of mutual concern. Piracies, crimes and other offenses on the waters were addressed. Valuation of foreign currency, trade and tariffs were addressed. Sections seven and eight of the Compact of 1785 deal with fishing and other riparian rights on the Potomac. These sections deserve to be quoted in full.

*Seventh. The citizens of each state respectively shall have full property in the shores of Potowmack river adjoining their lands, with all emoluments and advantages thereunto belonging, and the privilege of making and carrying out wharves and other improvements, so as not to obstruct or injure the navigation of the river; but the right of fishing in the river shall be common to, and equally enjoyed by the citizens of both states. Provided, that such common right be not exercised by the citizens of the one state, to the hindrance or disturbance of the fisheries on the shores of the other state; and that the citizens of neither state shall have a right to fish with nets or seines on the shores of the other.*

*Eighth. All laws and regulations which may be necessary for the preservation of fish, or for the performance of quarantine, in the river Potowmack, or for preserving and keeping open the channel and navigation thereof, or of the river Poconoke, within the limits of Virginia, by preventing the throwing out ballast, or giving any other*




Bruce Lemmert

*The Fairfax Stone officially designated as the birthplace of the Potomac once marked the western boundary of the Fairfax Estate.*

*obstruction thereto, shall be made with mutual consent and approbation of both states.*

Contrary to what one would believe today, it was Maryland not Virginia that insisted on the fishing agreement. "The idea of the right of fishing on both shores of the Potomac River is one the Marylanders are not fond of parting with." Of course it should be noted here that Virginians never, ever, considered that they could not fish or use the Potomac. It was simply a birthright. In addition to the Masons and the Washingtons, other prominent Virginia families that grew up on and used the Potomac included the Lees, the Fairfaxes and the Carters.

Just as the Revolution clarified the control that the British Crown would henceforth have on the Americans, the Compact of 1785 clarified what effect previous King's grants would have on ownership and use of the Potomac. Despite Lord Culpeper's grant on the Northern Neck that included the Potomac River, Virginia conceded ownership of the entire river to Maryland, to the Virginia shore. Maryland in turn, conceded equal fishing and riparian rights on the Potomac to citizens of Virginia. Maryland owned the Potomac, but Virginia and Maryland can each use the river. That, in essence is the Compact of 1785. Subsequent court cases have upheld the agreement of the Mount Vernon Convention. This was affirmed as recently as 2003 when the United States Supreme Court recognized Maryland's sovereignty over the entire riverbed of the Potomac, but also recognized Virginia's riparian right to extend water pipes to the middle of the river and take water.

Bruce Lemmert

*Picture of the Potomac at Harpers Ferry, WVa. "The passage of the Patowmac through the Blue Ridge is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature. This scene is worth the voyage across the Atlantic," wrote Thomas Jefferson. This scene today is where Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia join.*

By 1785, Virginians had been fishing and using the Potomac for nearly two hundred years. The Compact of 1785 affirmed in writing that this would never end. Riparian rights were of course important to the Virginians, but their collective gaze was decidedly westward. At the time of the Mount Vernon Convention, the Virginians saw the Potomac River valley as the corridor of empire. Almost exclusively, prominent Virginians owned the Ohio Company, and some saw the company as almost an extension of Virginia government.

It should be a surprise to no one that our nation's capitol ended up on the Potomac where it did. George Washington, "Father of Our Country," and a proud Virginian (I might add), had during a six-year time span of the revolution, not been able to return to his beloved Mount Vernon, on the Potomac. Henry Lee probably best described public sentiment with respect to George Washington, "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Washington D. C. is little more than a silver dollar's throw from Mount Vernon. President Washington, in 1790, was very likely to get what he wanted.

Washington D. C. was a 10-mile squared area on the Potomac River, formed in 1791 from lands in both Maryland and Virginia. By an Act of Congress in 1846 the Virginia section of the District of Colombia was "retroceded" to the State of Virginia. This was done under the simple premise that the nation's capitol did not then need, nor was it likely to ever need, that amount of land. The Act of Congress, said in part, "*...all of that portion of the District of Columbia ceded to; the United States by the State of Virginia,* (present day Arlington County and Alexandria City) *and all rights and jurisdiction therewith ceded over the same, be, and the same are hereby, ceded and forever relinquished to the State of Virginia, in full and absolute right and jurisdiction, as well of soil as of person residing or to reside theron.*"

Bruce Lemmert

*The Fairfax Stone, near Thomas, WVa. This site, in addition to the historic importance, symbolizes the innumerable water sources for the Potomac watershed.*

So in 1846, with all rights reserved, citizens of the county of Alexandria carried on as Virginians, including fishing the Potomac. This was hardly noticed or talked about until 1988. On January 1, 1988, the District of Columbia issued their first fishing licenses, and indicated that there were no exceptions to the license law, including Virginians fishing the Potomac with a valid Virginia fishing license. Had the Potomac riparian rights of Virginians been usurped for the first time since John Smith fished the Potomac in 1608?

The late Virginia gentleman, John Richards, owned and operated Potomac Arms Corporation at Zero Prince Street, in Alexandria on the Potomac for over fifty years. A few years ago I asked John if he thought the District could require him to purchase a District of Columbia fishing license to fish the Potomac off his dock in Alexandria. I believe John spoke for many Virginians when he smiled, rolled his eyes and said, "I don't think so."

When a 1910 disagreement between Maryland and West Virginia, over the location of the boundary between those two states, reached Federal Court, the case turned on the historical relationship between Virginia and Maryland.[3] West Virginia evolved from Virginia in 1863, as did her law and history. The actual state line between Maryland and West Virginia was determined to be the low water line of the Potomac River on the West Virginia side. This was consistent with the previous court rulings between Maryland and Virginia. And, West "by God" Virginians maintain their riparian and fishing rights on the Potomac as per the Compact of 1785. The court has maintained that the King's grants and subsequent agreements between Virginia and Maryland, made prior to 1863, do in fact apply to West Virginia.

The exact location of the state line between Maryland and Virginia continued to be debated until independent arbitrators were appointed by each state in 1877. This arbitration held in Alexandria, affirmed Virginia's "right to such use of the river...as may be necessary to the full enjoyment of her riparian ownership." This arbitrated agreement became known as the Black-Jenkins Award of 1877. The agreement also stipulated that the boundary line between the two states would be the low water mark on the Virginia side. The agreement went on to state, "The low water mark on the Potomac to which Virginia has a right in the soil, is to be measured from the low-water mark at one headland to the low water mark at another, without following indentations, bays, creeks, inlets or affluent rivers." The Black-Jenkins Award was surveyed in 1927. The survey often times strikes across open water instead of simply meandering with the river.

Perhaps the most profound cooperative agreement on the Potomac River happened on March 25, 1634. Governor Calvert's Dove landed on the Potomac among the Piscataway Indians. The Marylanders expressed peaceful intentions to the natives and one might think they were stunned by the response. A chieftain on the Virginia side, said, "We will use one table. My people shall hunt for my brother, and all things shall be in common" (Brugger, 1988, 9). In the minds of the Piscataway Indians, the land, the water and indeed the universe, belonged to everyone.

The Piscataway concept is not completely lost. Indeed, communal responsibility for the Potomac is an old idea. In 1940, the Potomac River Basin Commission was created to deal with endemic pollution in the Potomac. Sections of the river were considered dead. In places, the Potomac was nothing more than an open sewer. All the jurisdictions of the 14,500 square mile Potomac Basin were included in this Commission. Progress again was

*Above: Picture of the Potomac at Alexandria, at what is now Potomac Arms. John Richards operated a firearms store here for over 50 years. The building now sits on dry land due to the river's every changing shoreline. Right: Historical scene of abundance of fish caught on lower Potomac, near the resort city of Colonial Beach. (The Library of Virginia)*

slow. Not until Congress passed the Clean Water Act in the 1970s did the Potomac really begin to recover. Much, much progress has been made. It has been a cooperative effort.

The joint responsibility of managing the fisheries of the Potomac was recognized by the creation of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. This Commission, created in 1959 between Maryland and Virginia deals exclusively with managing the valuable fisheries resource on the tidewater portion of the Potomac River. Any fisheries manager will tell you that a fishery can be no better than the quality of the water. Still, a recent example of using cooperative regulations for creeling striped bass has significantly impacted that species in a positive way.

A hardened poacher once advised me (a game warden) "that the State could not tell him when and where he could harvest the deer that God had put here on this earth." I advised this individual, "God didn't put those deer here, the Virginia Game Department did." This truthful statement recognized the fact that deer had once been nearly extirpated in this area, and only through concerted management and protection by the state was the species brought back. With this anecdote in mind, we reflect on the Potomac.

Providence has dealt us a beautiful resource in the Potomac River. Is the Potomac something that we can take for granted? No, most assuredly not. Mistakes have been made on the Potomac and at times I'm sure it seemed that we were up that proverbial creek without a paddle. Now, like the crew teams that regularly practice on the Potomac, we must all pull together. Those that use and love the Potomac are much more likely to help nurture it's health. The Potomac is ours to manage and protect.

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*Upper Right: Each spring people from around the world gather along the Potomac River in Washington, DC and along the Virginia shoreline, to enjoy the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Above: No matter who claims to actually own the Potomac River, one thing is clear–this extraordinary resource will always be considered America's river.*

The title of this essay is *Virginia's Potomac*. That is not quite true. Virginia doesn't own the Potomac. It has been said that possession is nine-tenths of the law. In that case, Virginia owns only 90 percent of the Potomac. Enough already! Use it, fish it, love it, but most importantly, protect the Potomac. It is a natural treasure. Now that you have nearly four centuries of Virginia / Potomac history, you decide who owns America's river.

Maybe...just maybe, the Piscataway's had it right from the beginning. □

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*Bruce Lemmert has been a Virginia game warden assigned to Loudoun County since 1989. He is a regular contributor to* Virginia Wildlife *and is a member of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association (www.vowa.org).*

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## Read More About It!

Some of the information researched for this article was obtained from the following publications.


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[3](Maryland vs. State of West Virginia, 225 U. S. I, 32 S. Ct. 672 1912).

# Remember

*Like many small sporting clubs around the state the members of the Custis Hunting and Fishing Club celebrate a rich history of the sporting life.*

story by Tee Clarkson
photos by Dwight Dyke

My fly lands with the subtlety of a small boulder tumbling off a cliff, some 6 feet from a fallen tree; my intended target. Any self-respecting fish within 20 yards would now be tucked under the overhanging bushes, keeping a keen eye on the intruder tied to the end of my line. As I wait in vain for a bite that surely will not come, I can't help but wonder whether George Washington perhaps sat in this exact spot over 200 years ago, suffering the same frustration.

Custis Pond was originally constructed as a means of power for a

©Dwight Dyke

# When?

gristmill and certainly existed in the early 1700s and perhaps even in the late 1600s. In 1773 George Washington purchased this roughly 100-acre, horseshoe-shaped millpond in lower King William County, 8 miles north of West Point. He bought the property for his stepson John Parke Custis, Martha Washington's son by her first marriage, to add to bordering Romancoke Plantation which had been in the Custis family since 1744. It is rumored that young George even rowed Martha around the pond during their courtship, likely stopping every now and again to wet a line.

*Over the years Custis Pond has seen its share of both famous people and the not-so-famous. The one thing that all who visited this oasis have had in common was a love for the outdoors and an opportunity to enjoy some good hunting and fishing.*

Among other famous names associated with the pond is that of General Robert E. Lee. Although General Lee did not own the pond, he found himself in charge of the property in 1857 when George Washington Parke Custis, John Parke's son, passed away and willed the gristmill and pond to Robert E. Lee, Jr., who was too young to take over at the time. The Custis Hunting and Fishing Club then purchased the pond, as well as 50 adjoining acres, from Robert E. Lee, Jr. in 1904.

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*Today members and guests of Custis Hunting and Fishing Club enjoy many of the comforts of home. Tall tales of big fish that got away are only matched by the clubs long history.*

Custis Pond has been noted for its exceptionally large bluegill. The largest recorded catch weighed in at over a pound and a half. It is these large bluegill that I have been pursuing this morning, rather sloppily so far. Fortunately, my next cast floats softly down beside my original target, the fallen tree, prompting a small painted turtle to scuttle from its spot in the sun and disappear beneath the water's surface. One twitch and a pause—nothing. Another twitch and pause. A shape materializes from the tea stained water beneath the fly, stopping just short of my small, chartreuse popping bug. One more twitch results in a quick sucking noise and a swirl. After raising the rod, I am in for a friendly game of tug-of-war with a

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*With a history that spans over 300 years, and surviving numerous floods and droughts, Custis Pond continues to produce some excellent fishing. Careful management of the pond and land around it, has resulted is strong populations of crappie, bluegill and largemouth bass, along with an incredible diversity of wildlife.*

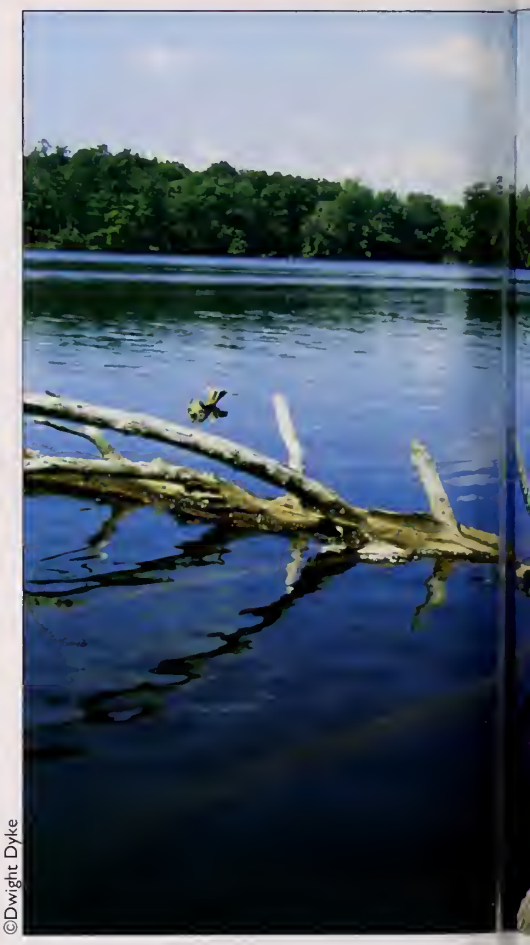
nice, hand-sized bluegill. As I reach over and lift this fine fish into the boat, I notice a disappointment in the bluegill's eye. Perhaps men of higher stature have caught his relatives.

Custis Hunting and Fishing Club celebrates its centennial anniversary this year. The original club members, who were touted in an article in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* in 1905 as "some of the most prominent and ardent sportsman in the state," were and still are mostly from Richmond. Membership is often passed from father to son, and some of the 45 current members can trace their lineage to the formation of the club in 1904. At the time of the club's inception, the Southern Railway regularly stopped at Sweet Hall Station, just three miles down the road. The members would ride the train down from Richmond and get a man at the station to give them a lift over to the pond.

While there are many names including Washington and Lee mentioned in the records of Custis Pond, there is perhaps none more important than "Lipscomb." The Lipscombs have been involved with the property since before the club was formed. M.C. Lipscomb, born just two miles away on the banks of the Pamunkey River in 1940, currently oversees the property and has since 1984. His grandmother was born in a small house at the millpond when it was owned by Robert E. Lee, Jr. His grandfather, Hudson Lipscomb, Jr., cleared the land where the clubhouse now stands in the winter of 1904.

In 1916 a hurricane hit eastern Virginia, forcing the dam to be cut in order to save the pond. As a result many of the fish were flushed from the pond and wound up in the pools of the small creek below, which empties into the Mattaponi River. The club paid M.C.'s father, Hudson Lipscomb, III, 50 cents a day to collect the fish and return them to the pond once the dam had been repaired. Young Hudson Lipscomb III must have made a good impression because the members hired him as the caretaker in 1949, and he moved in with his family, including 9-year-old M.C.

The pond has almost been lost on several occasions, but perhaps these nearly avoided tragedies have been in the best interest of the fishing. In 1935 heavy rains washed out 90 percent of all ponds in the state of Virginia. Custis thankfully was spared due to a second dam that had been added in 1922, resulting in a loss of only one quarter of the pond's water. Members were concerned, however, that a substantial amount of fish



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might have been lost. To supplement this possible loss of fish, a quantity of largemouth bass was brought from Virginia's Back Bay and stocked in the pond in 1936.

Following this stocking, a Virginia state fish hatchery stocked Custis Pond each year for about 10 years

*Even the handmade, wooden boats used by club members for fishing and recreation are a testament to the rich sporting heritage that continues to be carried on to this day at Custis Pond.*

with 10,000 bass fingerlings and 6,000 bream fingerlings. As a result of these stockings and a fish management program adopted by the club's members, Custis certainly has no shortage of fish, and big fish for that matter. The largest bass on record is 15 pounds. Not only is there a substantial amount of bluegill and bass, but the pond plays host to a large crappie population, and also contains modest numbers of ring perch and chain pickerel.

While the pond provides an excellent sanctuary for these species of fish, the club is also home to a tremendous variety of waterfowl and birds of prey. It is not uncommon to see ospreys, bald eagles, kingfishers, blue heron, geese and many different species of ducks in the same day.

My afternoon on the water is highlighted by the sight of a young bald eagle just learning to fly, not to mention dozens of quality bluegill. As the old growth trees lining the bank begin to provide more shade, I decide it is time to switch rods and try and tempt a bass or two to the surface. After several minutes of throwing a large deer hair popper, my efforts are rewarded as my fly disappears in an explosion of frothy water. I can only laugh as this 4 pounder shakes and thrashes in the air, spitting a mass of hook, deer hair and rubber legs right back at me. On that note it is time to call it a day and return to the clubhouse to record my catch into the massive fishing log that the club has been keeping since it first began. Unfortunately there is no room for stories of the big one that got away, but those are better left to be told in one of the rockers on the porch that wraps completely around the clubhouse.

As my day now comes to a close, I can't help but wonder about Washington's experience here. Closing my eyes, I try and imagine a picture of Washington on the water, perhaps alone, in a boat not unlike the one I am in right now, handcrafted from wood and sturdy. Of course, he wouldn't have been equipped with a trolling motor or a fly rod in those days, but there is little doubt that he enjoyed his time on this same pond, whether the fish were biting or not. □

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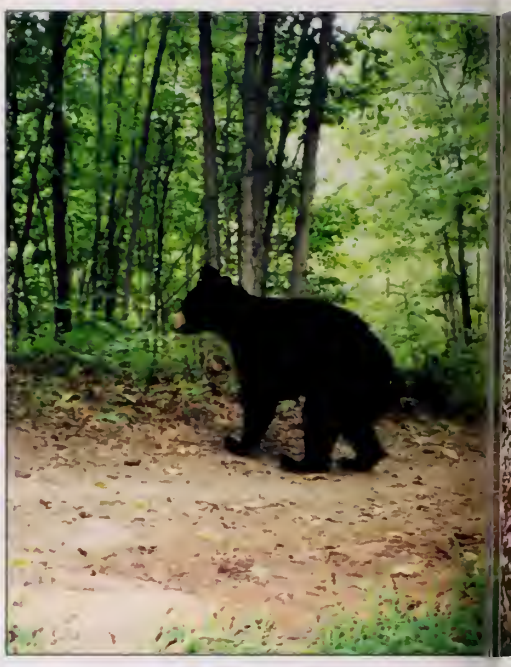
*Tee Clarkson spent six years as a fly fishing guide on the Green River in Utah before becoming a high school English teacher. He currently teaches at Deep Run High School in Henrico County.*

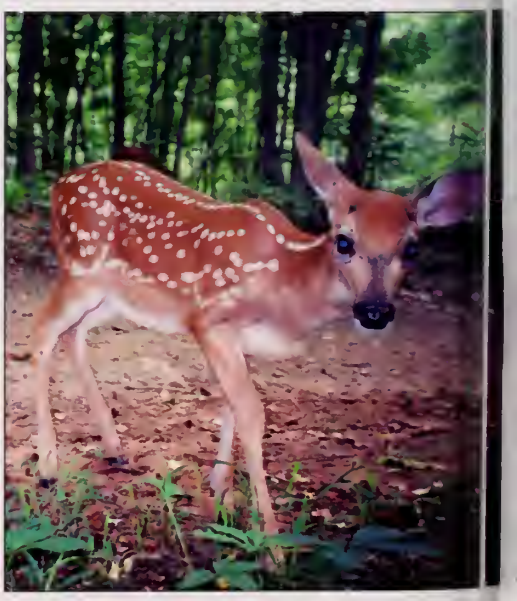


# Wildlife Pap

*As new digital photographic technology advances, wildlife managers are finding that "a good picture is worth a thousand words."*

story and photos by Jason Swenson and Dr. Marcella J. Kelly

I didn't know how exciting picking up a pack of pictures from the developer could be until I started camera trapping. Camera trapping is the process of using remotely triggered infrared camera technology to monitor animals in a field setting. Depending on the type, camera traps are triggered by either the heat of a warm body passing in front of the camera's heat sensor, or by an animal breaking an infrared beam that crosses a trail. I can still remember picking up my first set of camera trap pictures and getting so excited that I had to start looking at them right in the store! I could hardly believe we had actually "caught" animals with these devices. We caught deer (of course) and much to our surprise, bears, turkeys, hares, foxes, and even bobcats. We also caught onto the reality that many problems accompanied using camera traps in the field. After developing those first few rolls of film, I was quite disappointed to realize how much time, effort, and money is wasted when the cameras don't work correctly. Anyone who has used camera traps in the field knows that the amazing results that come from having hard evidence of reclusive animals are paired with mechanical malfunctions, user errors and wasted pictures. Remotely triggered cameras have had a long evolution from the first pressure pad cameras developed in the 1940s to the slick new digital camera traps available to consumers today. The infrared camera trap commonly used by hunters and researchers today began to be used in earnest in the early 1980s when field biologists began manufacturing homemade versions to capture their study animals on film. Since then camera traps have become consumer items that are significantly cheaper, easier to



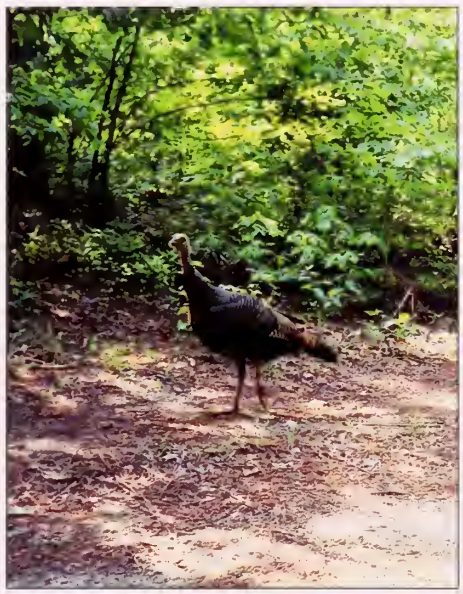
*Left to right: Dr. Marcella Kelly and Jason Swenson have found that remotely triggered infrared cameras can be an excellent tool for revealing an unseen wildlife wonderland. Their pictures have included wild turkey, deer, bear, squirrel, raccoon, bobcat and other birds and mammals.*

# arazzi

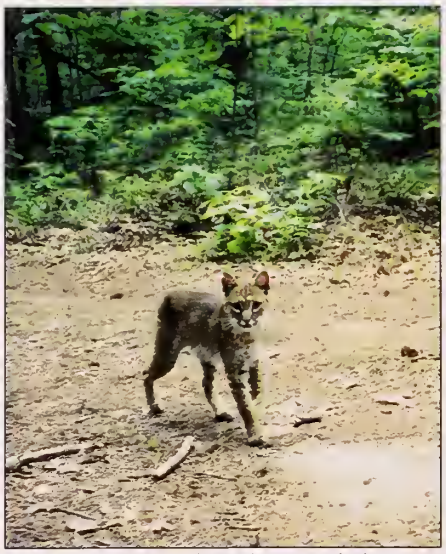
use, and more reliable. But that doesn't mean they have become infallible.

It was just over a year ago when I started helping Dr. Marcella Kelly, an assistant professor at Virginia Tech in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Studies, with a study designed to compare the effectiveness of several different models of remotely triggered cameras available to consumers and researchers. For many years researchers have struggled with the problems associated with studying reclusive animals that are wary of human presence. Today, the camera trap can be used to accomplish many tasks such as determining presence/absence, population size, and density of wildlife populations that were difficult or nearly impossible to observe using conventional methods. For example, Dr. Kelly uses camera traps to estimate jaguar density in Belize, Central America, leopard densities in Tanzania and in collaboration with graduate students, even male deer density in Virginia. She began this camera trap evaluation project in an effort to quantify the camera reliability she has observed during her years of camera trap use. It is extremely important for a field biologist to be able to utilize the best equipment possible while remaining within a relatively tight budget. Look through any popular hunting/outdoor catalog and you can easily be overwhelmed by the choices of camera types and functions available. With such a myriad of choices available in style and cost of camera traps, how can you get the biggest bang for your buck? Is it better to pick an expensive model hoping it is more reliable and will ultimately provide better data? Would a less expensive model work just as well and allow you to purchase additional units, thus allowing coverage of a larger area and the "capture" of more animals? These are important and difficult questions faced by not only wildlife biologists but also by hunters and land managers.

With these questions in mind Dr. Kelly decided to test various camera traps under real-world conditions. We set up several camera stations on the Kennedy Tree farm near Dillwyn, Virginia. The Kennedy Tree Farm has a long-standing relationship with Virginia Tech. The 1350-acre tree farm was originally acquired by brothers Robert and William Kennedy in 1944, and almost immediately they began partnering with various state and federal agencies including the Virginia Department of Forestry, the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers, and eventually Virginia Tech. These partnerships have encompassed soil conservation efforts, forestry experiments, creation of several large ponds, and even fisheries analysis. Currently, the farm is owned and managed by brothers Kit and Jan Kennedy, sons of Robert Kennedy. Since the Kennedy family places such an emphasis on quality land stewardship they wel-



*Camera trapping is a great way of collecting information that can benefit biologists and hunters. It is also catching on with wildlife photographers.*



*Stopping in its tracks, this young bobcat senses that he is being watched.*

comed and supported our project. As a small return for their support we have been able to provide them with an increased awareness of the diversity of wildlife present on the tree farm as well as some fantastic photographs.

At the farm, we equipped each camera trap station with six makes and models of camera traps, ranging from relatively inexpensive commercially available film camera traps to costly new digital camera traps and even remotely triggered video cameras that record preset lengths of video when triggered by an animal. We can then compare the various cameras by determining if the cameras captured the same animals at the same time or if some of the cameras "missed" a certain animal. In addition to "hits" and "misses" made by each camera we can observe the malfunctions encountered by each camera type and determine if it was a true camera failure or just user error. Both user error and mechanical failures are problems encountered in the field and it is important to be able to distinguish between them. We have had good success in capturing a variety of animals on the farm which should in turn produce accurate information on each camera's performance. The table below displays some of the wildlife data we have collected so far. In addition, because each picture is imprinted with a date and time stamp, the user can determine the timing of activity patterns for each of the species captured on film. Besides gaining useful information for biologists on locations and activity patterns, hunters can certainly use this type of information to potentially increase their hunting success.

| Animal's Common Name | Number of Pictures |
|---|---|
| White-tailed deer | 185 |
| Eastern cottontail rabbit | 44 |
| Gray squirrel | 35 |
| Wild Turkey | 29 |
| Raccoon | 25 |
| Bobcat | 21 |
| Crow | 18 |
| Opossum | 17 |
| Groundhog | 5 |
| Black bear | 3 |
| Gray fox | 2 |
| Red Fox | 1 |
| Wood Thrush | 1 |
| Grand Total | 386 |

Technology continues to provide new tools for researchers, biologists, hunters and land managers, but embracing this technology can be frustrating and intimidating. So, is camera trapping worth the disappointments and aggravation? The answer

is a resounding yes! With a few informed choices and a little patience the results can be amazing, making camera trapping one of the most rewarding experiences for any wildlife enthusiast. While the results of the camera comparisons are not yet complete, feel free to contact either myself (Jason Swenson) or Dr. Marcella Kelly regarding the pros and cons of several of the various remote camera systems currently available. □

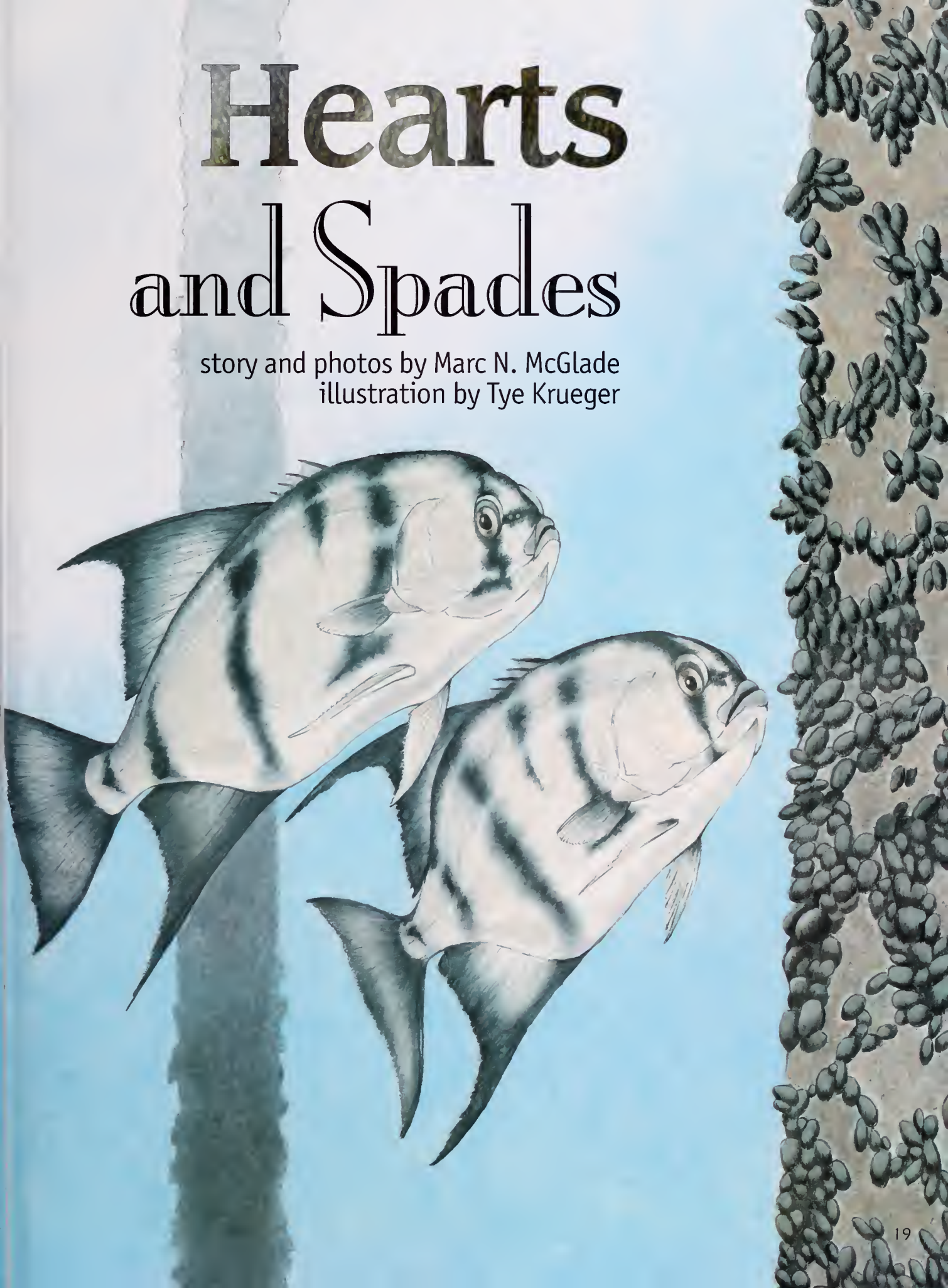
*Jason Swenson (jswenson@vt.edu) is a junior Wildlife Sciences student at Virginia Tech after a former career in computer networking.*

*Dr. Marcella J. Kelly (makelly@vt.edu) started as an Assistant Professor in Wildlife Sciences at Virginia Tech in Fall 2001, where she currently works on population dynamics of wildlife species.*

*Many of the animals photographed were caught on camera traveling along well-marked trails.*

# Hearts and Spades

story and photos by Marc N. McGlade
illustration by Tye Krueger



*Some people refer to them as "bluegills on steroids." Spadefish will test the best saltwater angler's skill when it comes to the fight and sheer power of these angelic-looking fish.*

This story isn't about a card game, as the title might suggest. It's about one of the most underrated fish species that swim in the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. They have been described as a runaway freight train. Others, jokingly, refer to them as "bluegills on steroids." Some folks mistakenly call them angelfish. Whatever you call them, know this: if you hook one, you're in for a street fight. Spadefish are not for the faint- or weak-hearted.

Although they are angelic-looking fish, "spades" have a big heart and fight like the dickens. If you're sporting a bum ticker, may we suggest targeting another species—maybe one less brutish, as these beautiful fish will test anyone's pulse and heart rate with their incredible strength.

*Capt. Steve Wray admires a "typical" spadefish. Spades grow big in Virginia waters. According to the International Game Fish Association, the world record stands at 14 pounds and was caught by George Brace in the Chesapeake Bay, in 1986. The state record is 13 pounds and was caught by Otis Tribble in 1988.*

*Spades can be caught within sight of Virginia Beach and around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Below right; The Chesapeake Light Tower is one of the best locations for catching spadefish during the summer.*

The Atlantic spadefish is silvery in color and has four to six black, vertical bands on each side that can become obscure on larger fish. Sometimes the darker spades act like chameleons: they'll change color from dark to white with distinct black bars before your very eyes once boated. They have a deep, flattened body and the first and second dorsal fins are separated. The caudal fin, or tail fin, is concave. Its anterior rays of the second dorsal fin and anal fin are elongated.

Spadefish inhabit inshore and nearshore areas, particularly around natural and artificial reefs. These wide-bodied bruisers also spend time near navigation markers in 15 to 20 feet of water.

Spadefish spawn in spring and summer and are known to travel in large schools. Small juveniles are almost totally black. A keen eye can spot them drifting on their sides mimicking floating debris. It's a sight to behold watching spades feed and come to the surface. They generally dine upon crustaceans, small encrusting invertebrates and jellyfish.

Virginia Beach is widely regarded as spadefish mecca. Not only did the International Game Fish Association's world-record spadefish reside in Virginia, a 14-pound pumpkin, but schools of 5- to 9-pounders are commonplace in Tidewater. Summertime in the Old Dominion doesn't get much better than fighting these spectacular fish—they might just be an angler's strongest adversary, pound for pound, in all of saltwater.

## Virginia Grows Em Big

"Typically, the spades arrive by Memorial Day and are thick by the first of June," says Claude Bain, the director of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament. "They'll stay here until about mid-September."

Bain likes to target the Cell (where the world record was caught), the Chesapeake Light Tower, coastal wrecks and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) for spadefish.

"These areas produce them yearly," he says.

Spades are relatively new on the list of citation species in Virginia.

"We added spadefish in 1995 to the VSFT's list of species," Bain adds. "History is on our side when it comes to big spadefish. We've caught some monster spades in our area over the years."

He points out that spadefishing is virtually a non-existent commercial fishery, and has just recently become a recreational one.

"The only places that folks seem to target them actively in a recreational manner," Bain says, "are South Carolina and Virginia."

An angler can earn a citation for catching a spadefish weighing 9 pounds or more or measuring at least 22 inches in length. Although trophies are nice—Virginia is full of them—the numbers of 5- to 8-pounders that inundate this region really tell the story. Virginia is home to gargantuan spades. The world record stands tall since 1986 and must have resembled a trashcan lid.

## The CBBT, Reefs and Wrecks

An engineering marvel, the CBBT spans 17.6 miles connecting Virginia's Eastern Shore to the mainland of Tidewater and Virginia Beach. This series of bridges, tunnels (known locally as "tubes"), causeways and artificial islands is one of the greatest man-made fishing structures the world over. Stripers, gray trout, cobia, flounder, red drum, black drum, croaker, bluefish and others visit this immense structure throughout the year. Anglers catch many other species here, too. However, one

of the favorites is the Atlantic spadefish.

There are four artificial islands separating tunnels from bridges at the CBBT; they're comprised of giant boulders, providing excellent structure for the spades. Look for these unusual and beautiful fish—which fight like a pit bull—near the rocks. Other good areas are along the concrete columns that serve as the bridge's trestles—and look like a giant centipede.

"At the CBBT, look for cruising fish," says Capt. Steve Wray, a charter boat captain from Virginia Beach. "I like to anchor off the rock islands (about 100 feet up current of the rocks) and float clams between the boat and the islands. Wherever I mark the spades, I'll anchor, but it's hard to keep sea bass, stripers and black drum off the baits because they too like clams."

Wray, 50, also likes to target spadefish at nearshore wrecks like the Cell, Anglo, Tiger and Santore.

"Of course, the Chesapeake Light Tower reef is hard to beat," Wray says. "Because spadefish are so structure-oriented, it's common to find schools of them mixed in with other species with similar habits, like triggerfish, sheepshead and cobia."

## Tried-And-True Techniques

Fishing for spadefish is quite easy, although this species can be finicky. Essentially, there are two ways to rig for spades: the first is similar to bream fishing—a float, sinker and live-bait hook. Total length of the rig depends upon how the fish are behaving, but generally, the float is 6 to 8 feet from the hook. Standard fare for the second setup is the fish-finder rig. Expert spade hunters recommend anglers use both to determine which is working better on any given day.

Bain uses pieces of chowder clams with a relatively small hook. Additionally, he recommends anglers chum with clams to attract spades.

"I started using a No. 4 and No. 6 hook, but now I use a 1/0, short-shank hook," Bain says. "They work well, and some other anglers are now using circle hooks and appear to be doing well with them, too."

The current dictates how much weight to add to your line.

"They usually swim 6 to 8 feet under the surface," he says. "If it's slack tide, I use a bobber. With current, though, I'll use a ¼- to 1-ounce sinker to get the bait down. I think it's important to get the bait away from the boat. They can see and hear the boat; therefore, use the lightest weight possible and get the bait away from the boat."

Wray places an egg sinker, ranging from ¼- to ¾-ounce, above a swivel, like a bass-fishing version of a Carolina rig. The spadefish expert employs a 3-foot leader, with a No. 1 Gamakatsu live-bait hook.

"If they're not leader-shy, I'll use 17-pound-test monofilament for the leader and the standing line," Wray says. "However, if they are shy of the leader, I use 15-pound-test fluorocarbon."

Wray will put several rigs down at once. He'll rig some with a float above the sinker, either as a slip-cork

The cannonball jellyfish is prevalent in South Carolina and stays on the hook better than Virginia's species of jellyfish.

"The jellyfish in South Carolina have a better consistency and remain on the hook," Bain advises. "You can see the spades eating jellyfish, but our types won't stay on the hook. Our studies have shown that spadefish also eat juvenile mussels with a vengeance.

"In late summer, I usually like to fish around the third and fourth island of the CBBT, but sometimes boat traffic is heavy there, which hurts. You can usually see these fish swimming around, but heavy traffic will spook them."

*Fresh chowder clams are the bait of choice among spadefish anglers in the know. Experts indicate it's best to completely cover the hook with the clam.*

or fixed to the line. He also fishes some rigs without a float—but not on the bottom.

"You have to find out where in the water column the fish are," he says. "If we have good water clarity, we can decide how deep to fish the baits because we can see them swimming in schools. If the water is somewhat dingy, we have to experiment at different depths. We never bottom fish because spades don't feed on the bottom and other fish species will pick up the baits, anyway."

Wray prefers bait-casting reels

*Keep your tackle simple when fishing for spadefish. A brightly colored float, along with a little weight, a small live-bait hook covered with a piece of fresh clam is all you need.*

matched to medium-heavy action rods, ranging from 6 to 6½ feet long.

"Spadefishing is an action-packed deal," Wray says. "They're one of the hardest-fighting fish for their size. If they got much over 10 pounds, you'd have to use offshore tackle."

Boating spades can present challenges, especially if you're in or near the heavy structure that they like; for instance, the Chesapeake Light Tower can present inherent problems due to its structure. The legs serve as a break-off point where spades can wrap or slice the line against the legs.

"I like to use one-half of a chowder clam as a bait for each rig, and I impale them on the live-bait hook, trying to completely cover the hook," Wray says. "It's very important that the point of the hook be buried in the clam. Sometimes it's vital to have the entire hook covered so nothing is visible because they have very good eyesight. I like to insert the hook first into the foot of the clam, then come back and insert the hook into the soft part of the clam body."

Wray believes wholeheartedly in the use of a chum cage.

"The boat that's chumming is the one who's gonna keep the attention of the spades around them," he says. Wray cautions anglers not to use the cross-his-eyes hook-set with spades. "Usually, all that's required is to take up the slack and gently pull the rod to one side and let them hook themselves," he adds. "Spades' mouths are like sandpaper, so check your leader above the hook after each fish. Otherwise, your line will be frayed and you're guaranteed to lose the next fish."

I don't know about you, but the thought of catching 5- to 9-pound "bluegills"—or even bigger—makes my hair stand on end. The Virginia Beach area is prime spadefish territory. One caveat to the above-mentioned spadefish haunts is crowds. Weekdays are less crowded, and if you fish the Chesapeake Light Tower, you'll sometimes have to contend with divers. They can spook the spades and put them on red alert. Some say the spade bite slows even as the diving boats approach.

Come see for yourself just how big a heart lurks inside a spade. If you've never done battle with one of these wide bodies, you owe it to yourself to test your tackle and skill. They never give up, strip line, and make impressive and successive runs until they reach the landing net. Just remember to bring extra drag washers!

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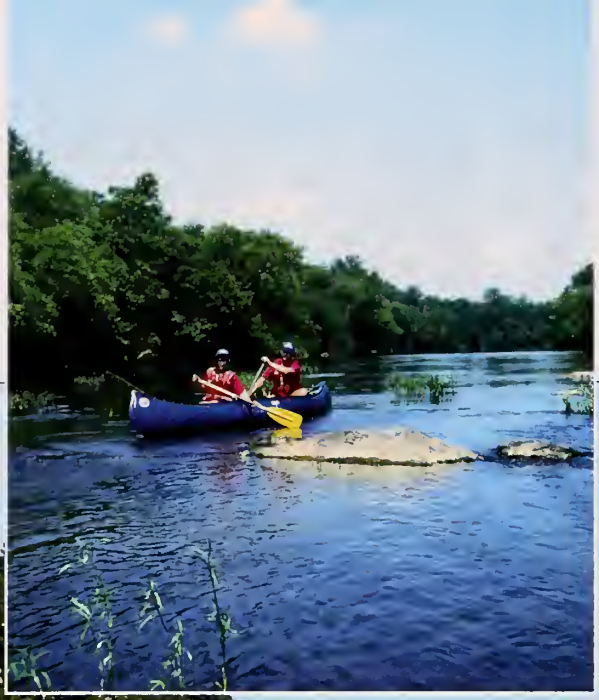
*Marc McGlade is a writer and photographer from Midlothian. He became addicted to spade fishing after his first trip. Marc has been a regular contributor to* Virginia Wildlife *since 1998.*

## For More Information

- ADC's *Waterproof Chartbook of the Chesapeake Bay*, 7th Edition by ADC, phone (888) 420-6277, e-mail gmco@adelphia.net, Web site www.gmcomaps.com; *Virginia Atlas & Gazetteer* by DeLorme, phone (800) 452-5931, Web site www.delorme.com.
- For a listing of available charter boat captains serving the Chesapeake Bay and Outer Banks fishing community, visit www.vbsf.net. Contact Capt. Steve Wray, call (757) 481-7517, e-mail steve@longbaypointebaitandtackle.com or visit his Web site at www.longbaypointebaitandtackle.com.
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission, phone (757) 247-2200, Web site www.mrc.state.va.us; Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, phone (757) 491-5160, e-mail mrcswt@visi.net; Virginia Beach Visitor Information Center, phone (800) VA-BEACH; City of Virginia Beach general information, www.vbgov.com.
- The Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel is close to the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Nearby launch sites include: Owl's Creek in Rudee Inlet; Seashore State Park at the end of 64th Street; Lynnhaven Boat Ramp and Beach Facility in Lynnhaven Inlet, phone (757) 460-7590.
- Virginia's spadefish have a possession limit of four per person, per day, with no minimum size restriction. The size and possession limits of all saltwater species in Virginia are subject to change; therefore, anglers should check current regulations frequently either by calling the Virginia Marine Resources Commission or visiting their Web site.



# Canoe Camping

*Top: Whether you're paddling down the Rappahannock (top) or the James rivers (above), with proper precautions and good planning, canoe camping can be a wonderful way for couples or other family members to enjoy the outdoors.*

story and photos
by Bruce Ingram

*Maximize your next camping trip with a float trip down one of Virginia's many scenic rivers.*

The canoe camping excursion that my wife and I took down the Rapidan River in June 1989 is one that will long live in infamy in our family outdoor chronicles. Late in the afternoon of our initial day, we paddled up to a point where the beach was sandy and lay convenient to the river's edge. Elaine and I deemed the sand as a perfect place to spend the night, as the sand would be a soft place to pitch our tent, and we could hear the water gently lapping at the shoreline all night.

After we built the traditional campfire on the beach, my wife and I shared a relaxing few hours before turning in. But upon entering our tent, we found that water had already seeped through the cheap floor fabric and that our sleeping bags were damp. Around midnight, a

thunderstorm hit, and the roof of our tent began leaking unmercifully. Two hours later, as the storm continued unabated, the water that had been gently lapping against the beach now came rudely slapping against our tent.

My spouse and I were too scared to go back to sleep, and we spent the rest of the night anxiously eyeing the rising Rapidan. By dawn the river was muddy and still rising, so we decided to paddle quickly to the confluence of the Rapidan and Rappahannock and then the 8 miles to the take-out at Motts Landing. At the confluence's rock garden, our canoe hit a rock, overturning us and sending much of our gear to the bottom of the river—we had neglected to tie down some of our possessions and hadn't bothered to bring along a dry bag.

In mid morning, we reached Motts, but not before being further terrified by more thunderstorms and the continually rising water. Safely home the next day, Elaine and I watched the news where a broadcaster proclaimed that the Rappahannock and Rapidan had both reached flood stage.

The preceding was a textbook example of how not to go canoe camping on any waterway. Craig Fields,

*It is important that you be prepared and plan for the unexpected before you set off on your canoe camping expedition. Always make sure you let someone know when and where you will be while afield and afloat.*

## Essential Gear List

1. One mess kit (each component with copper bottoms) per person.
2. Life jackets—I always wear one at all times, no matter how warm the temperature is or how mildly a river flows. It's also a good idea to bring a spare.
3. Water purifier.
4. Headlamps and flashlights.
5. Spare batteries.
6. First aid kit.
7. Eating utensils and short handled metal tongs for cooking.
8. Cell phone (if an emergency should arise).
9. Spare clothing, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent are must bring items.
10. Bailing sponge.
11. Bungee cords and extra rope.
12. Toiletry kit (including biodegradable soap).
13. A sharp folding knife.
14. Lighters and matches.
15. Duct tape.
16. Food (personal choice). For breakfasts and lunches, my favorite canoe camping foods are apples, bagels, energy bars and tuna in a pouch.

who lives in Dumfries and works for the Gun Owners of America, has canoe camped across the Commonwealth as well as on a number of other rivers in other states and on the Boundary Waters. In short, Craig points out that Elaine and I made a litany of poor decisions on our Rapidan junket.

First, sandy beaches are terrible places to pitch a tent. Sand seems to seek out all kinds of gear from fishing reels to the night's dinner. Sand also holds water extremely well, as the bottom of our tent proved that misbegotten night on the Rapidan. And, last, Craig notes that sandy beaches are usually very close to water.

On a summertime float down the Maury several summers ago, Fields showed me how to select an overnight spot. We pulled up to a mid river island that consisted of pebble size rocks and that featured a point that rose some 15 yards above the water line. At the top of the point, we found a level campsite that also provided good cross ventilation—necessary to disperse our scent so that hosts of winged beasties could not as easily track us down. A pebble and gravel beach doesn't hold water or abrade gear and its level status makes for good sleeping. And choosing a site well above the water line like Craig did just makes common sense.

## Sleeping Well

I have spent too many semi-sleepless nights on the Old Dominion's rivers, but after a sound repose in Craig's tent that night on the Maury, I'm sure I won't anymore. His basic floor plan is to first place a tarp, which is larger than the floor, inside the tent. That way should any water find its way in through the floor bottom, all gear and human occupants will be above the liquid. Decisions concerning sleeping pads and bags come next.

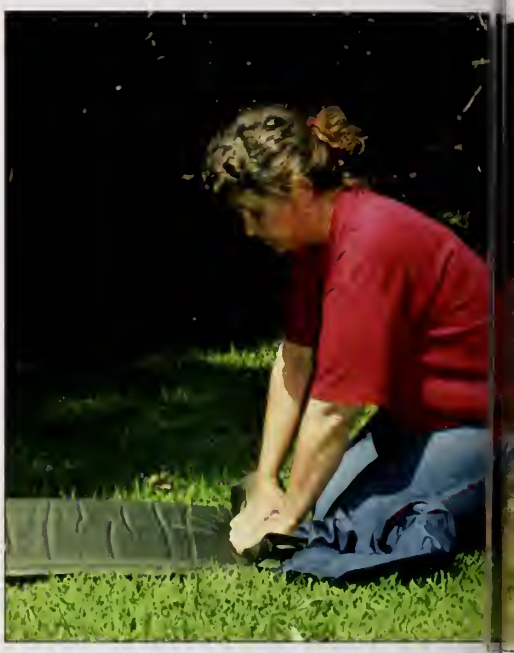
"Way more than one-half of your sleeping comfort comes from whether or not you purchase the right kind of sleeping pad," says Fields. "It is folly to buy less than a full-length, self-inflating pad. Even mine, and I'm only 5'6", is 72 inches long. The thicker the pad is, the more comfortable it will be. But the more it will weigh, and the more bulky it will be as well. One to 1½-inches is just about right for canoe camping. Backpackers should purchase something less thick, but never less than ½ inch. My recommendation is 1½ inches.

"If the cover has a slick feel to it, and you are a restless sleeper, you and your sleeping bag can slide off the pad like eggs coming off a Teflon pan. Most better brands nowadays feature a low-slip shell."

The Dumfries resident believes that many people obtain sleeping bags that are far too warm for river camping, especially in a Southern state such as Virginia. A bag rated at +25 degrees makes for a good three-season one. Lining is another important consideration. Nylon lining can be quite sweaty while soft flannel lining is heavy and bulky. A way around this problem is to purchase a bag with a nylon lining and then bring along a cotton sheet or sleeping bag liner "to ward off the stickiness."

Of course, the purchase of a tent is a major consideration. Craig believes that the tent manufacturers wildly overestimate the number of people that can sleep comfortably within their products. A good rule of thumb is that if, for example, two people are along on an expedition that they should bring a tent described as a "four-man" one (which typically has a floor size of 7'6"x 7'6" and a weight of around 7½ lbs). If an individual plans to sleep by himself, a two-person tent (which typically has a floor size of 5'x 7'6" and a weight of 5 lbs) will have acceptable space.

Fields strongly emphasizes that the foremost qualification of a tent is



*When being placed into a dry bag, sleeping bags should be stuffed not rolled. Doing so lessens bulk. Here, Elaine Ingram stuffs her sleeping bag and rolls her ground mat.*

that its seams are factory taped. This action insures more than any other that the tent won't leak. Next, select one that is freestanding, such as a dome or modified A-frame. The reason why is that given the vagaries of an island's composition, canoe campers might not be able to stake a tent completely down.

Aluminum tent poles are yet another important consideration, as Fields relates that fiberglass models too easily break. Finally, consider buying tents that feature multicoated, waterproof nylon and are flame retardant. Tents, sleeping bags and pads all need to be transported in quality dry bags. Stuff sacks alone, even high-dollar compression sacks, do not offer sufficient protection from the elements. Dry bags are a must, but do note, explains Fields, that sleeping bags should be stuffed, not rolled, as doing so lessens bulk immediately. All loose gear, such as things not needed for activities such as birding or fishing, should be tied into the canoe—something else that Elaine and I learned on our ill-fated Rapidan ramble as we watched gear either sink to the bottom or float away.

*Above: Craig Fields likes to skewer venison, fruit and vegetables for a meal that can only be described as a four-star outdoor dining experience. Below: A good selection of topwater tackle, crankbaits, soft plastics, and a few spinnerbaits will help to cover all the bases while you float and fish.*

## Dining Out

Remember that campfire that Elaine and I made on the sandy point. As we scooted away from the island, I noted how unsightly the ring was, as were the other ones that previous voyagers had made. Once again, Craig Fields offers a better way. After we set up the tent during our Maury getaway, Craig had me dig a rectangular trench large enough for a cooking grate, with diamond shaped holes to keep food from slipping through. I poured charcoal into the trench and positioned the grate so that it overlapped. After the coals had been burning for a while, Fields cut up some potatoes into fairly small pieces, added some butter and double wrapped the "tater bombs" in heavy-duty foil. While they were cooking, the sportsman placed venison tenderloin and a variety of fresh vegetables on skewers.

I rarely have experienced a dinner so scrumptious anywhere—and never on a canoe camping trek have I supped so well. The next morning, Craig had me fill in the trench, leaving the clean white ashes underneath to recycle into the substrate. Except for a matted space where the tent had been, no one could tell that humans had spent the night. And the skewers cleaned up much easier and faster than any frying pan and were much lighter as well.

Craig advises that evening dinners should be the major meal for the day—and a social function as well—especially if multiple paddlers undertake a trip. He and I strongly agree that breakfast and lunch should be brief, do-it-yourself type affairs, so as not to cut into fishing, bird watching, nature photography or whatever activity an individual enjoys while on a river.

## Fishing Gear

Fields emphasizes that fishing gear is another personal choice situation, but he and I also agree that lightweight pack rods or flyrods are of little practicality for the serious angler. While canoe campers may want to be conservative concerning space and weight of camping and cooking gear, both Craig and I advocate bringing along our full complement of fishing gear.

For me, that can mean a medium heavy baitcaster, two medium heavy spinning rods, a medium action spinning rod, and an 8½-foot bass bug taper longrod. In front of me in a canoe, I position four, hard plastic mini-tackle boxes, each of which contains a different category of baits. One box contains soft plastics, another topwaters, a third crankbaits and spinnerbaits, and the last fly patterns. I pair the soft plastic baits with the baitcaster and one of the medium heavy spinning rods, the topwaters are matched with the medium action spinning outfit, and the other lures generally go with the other medium heavy spinning rod. I see no use in bringing full size tackle boxes on treks down our rivers, regardless of whether I am canoe camping or not.

## Possible Trips

Public camping areas or campgrounds occur infrequently along Virginia rivers. In North Carolina along the New River, for example, exists the New River State Park where canoe campers have designated areas where they can spend the night and enjoy facilities. Individuals can paddle to these waysides and spend the night there. Perhaps such places and services will one day exist along some of our waterways, but none do now so far as I know.

Thus, the Old Dominion canoe camper basically has four options. He can attempt to contact a landowner along a river before or during a trip and ask for permission to spend the night on that individual's property. Second, the overnight voyager can select trips on rivers that have public land along one or both banks. For instance, I have camped out in the George Washington National Forest while on trips down the South Fork of the Shenandoah. Third, canoe campers can contact canoe liveries, which often own or rent land along rivers, and, for a fee, arrange to spend the night on the property of those businesses. And, fourth, paddlers can spend the night at mid river islands that are not privately owned. Campers can locate these islands by studying maps of our rivers.

Elaine's and my Rapidan River excursion in June of 1989 was so disastrous that my spouse would not go canoe camping with me for several years—and who could blame her. Use the tips offered by veteran canoe camper Craig Fields so that you and yours can have a safe, enjoyable journey down the wonderful rivers in our state. □

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*Bruce Ingram is the author of the following books:* The James River Guide *($15.00),* The New River Guide *($15.00), and* The Shenandoah/Rappahannock Rivers Guide *($18.25). To obtain a copy, send a check to Ingram at P.O. Box 429, Fincastle, VA 24090.*

## 2005 Outdoor Calendar of Events

**June 17–19:** *The Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Festival*, Richmond/Petersburg, Virginia Motorsports Park. Bring the family, and even your dog to experience first-hand what's new and hot in the outdoor world. Everything from hunting, fishing, archery, and biking gear, along with outdoor cooking will on display. Visitors will have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities, such as rock climbing, shooting, canoeing, fishing, archery, dog training and much more. For ticket information, festival rules and activities and directions call 1-901-758-3858 or visit the official Web site of Ducks Unlimited at www.ducks.org.

**July 8–10:** *Virginia Outdoors Weekend*, Twin Lakes State Park, Green Bay. For more information contact Jimmy Mootz at 804-367-0656 or e-mail Jimmy.Mootz@dgif.virginia.gov.

**August 26–28:** *Mother-Daughter Outdoors*, Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center, Appomattox. For more information contact Jimmy Mootz at 804-367-0656 or e-mail Jimmy.Mootz@dgif.virginia.gov. □

## Book Review

by Marika Byrd

*Harry Murray's Exclusive Flies: Tying Instructions*
Murray's Fly Shop
P. O. Box 156, 121 Main Street, Edinburg, VA 22824
www.murraysflyshop.com or info@murraysflyshop.com
Published by Shenandoah Publishing Co. 540/984-4212
$19.95, plus $1.00 tax and $4.00 shipping
Spiraled, paperback of 29 pages on heavyweight paper; 8.5" X 11"

*Exclusive Flies* is a thorough read from Harry Murray describing the tying of 27 flies designed by this nationally known fly fisherman and fly tying instructor. He puts it all together in a single source document which is easily readable. The nice thing is the instructions are straight forward, "how to" tie directions, with a color photograph showing the end result of successful tying and each fly is contained to a single page.

The 27 page titles include names like the James Wood Bucktail, Mr. Rapidan Parachute Dry Fly, Murray's Frisky Frog Deer Hair Bug to Murray's Sunfish Streamer and ending with the Wounded Minnow Series. Each page includes the required materials for each tying project.

The newly issued volume came off the press in late 2004. Why not go on-line, or call Murray's Fly Shop and purchase a personal copy before the supply is quickly exhausted. □

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

## Ain't No Game Warden Here

by Jennifer Worrell

Page County Game Warden Neil Kester is always prepared. Even on his days off, he carries his equipment—on one particular day, his attentiveness proved worthwhile. Kester was fishing with four of his friends at a nearby lake stocked with trout. Since the fish had to be 10 inches to keep, the men were throwing most of what they caught back in the water.

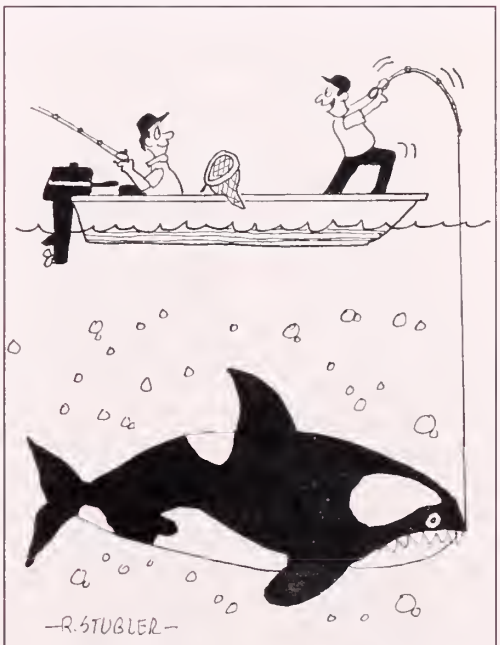
As they fished, another man walked up and asked if they were catching anything. One of Kester's friends informed him that they were catching quite a few, but the fish were just too small to keep.

The newcomer replied, "That's never stopped me before."

Kester's other friend said, "You never know when there's a game warden around."

The man answered, "Ain't no game warden here."

Kester watched as the arrogant gentleman began catching and keeping undersized trout. The warden walked to his truck, retrieved his badge and summons book, and wrote the surprised fisherman a ticket for his misdeeds. One never knows when a game warden is going to show up! □




"Get the net, Hank, I think I've hooked something big this time."

# 2004 Angler

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Hall of Fame list is a compilation of all the freshwater anglers who qualified for advanced awards in the Angler Recognition Program.

To achieve the status of Master Angler I, five trophy fish of different species must be caught and registered with the Virginia Angler Recognition Program. For Master II, 10 trophy fish of different species must be caught, and so on for the Master III or IV level. Expert anglers must catch and register 10 trophy fish of the same species.

Each angler that accomplishes this feat receives a Master Angler or Expert Angler certificate and patch. Expert patches include the species on the patch. There is no fee or application for Master or Expert.

If you have records prior to 1995 and believe you may have obtained this angling status, please call the Virginia Angler Recognition Program at (804) 367-8916 to have your records checked.

The Creel-of-the-Year Award recognizes the angler who accounts for the most trophy-size fish caught and registered in the Angler Recognition Program from January 1 through December 31, annually.

## MASTER ANGLER I

Louis Anton
Harold Arbogast
Stephen Batchelder
James Bethea
Jack Blankenship, Jr.
Charles Blum
Tracey Bowles
Billy Brads
James Brown, Sr.
James Burgess
Anthony Cirillo
Charles Clear
Augustus Collier, Jr.
Chris Creasy
Stephen Cromer
Billy Crutchfield, Jr.
Donald Davis
Michael Davis
Julius DeBose
Jackie Deel, Sr.
Bubba Denton, Jr.
Brian Dye
Lonnie Edwards
Chris Ellington
Ronnie Emerson
Erwin Ensing
Robert Estep, Jr.
Brenda Felts
William Fix
Melody Floyd
Harry Forrest
Frederick Frase
David Frye
John Goddard, Sr.
Larry Goff
Michael Greene
John Guthrie
William Hall, III
William Hall, IV
Wade Harold
James Hay
Will Helmick
Arthur Hill, Jr.
Robert Hoyt, Sr.
Eugene Humphreys
Terry Hutton, Jr.
Jason Jennings
William Jolly, Jr.
Casey Jones
Allen Kirby
Howard Kruse
Mike Lester
Timothy Little, Jr.
Kenneth Marsico
Jonathan Martin
James Martin
Red McClenny
David Meers
Joseph Mitchell
James Moore
Jonathan Morris
Daniel Neff
Billy Nelson, Jr.
William Nicar
William Pappas
Thomas Parsell
Heather Peelen
Steven Phillips
Tony Phipps
John Plyler, Jr.
Mike Puffenbarger
Steve Retallick
Gregory Rife
William Robertson
Kyle Rose
David Stallard
Harvey Stone, Jr.
Kevin Serrett
Rob Smith
Tim Spolarich
Lewis Stephens, Jr.
Warren Thompson
Richard Wilkinson
Chris Williams

## MASTER ANGLER II

Leonarad Almond, Sr.
Ernest Bell, III
Sharon Decker
James Ferguson, Sr.
George Geissler
Jerry Johnson
Jerry Lester
Anthony Padgett
Clabron Roberts, Jr.
Vance Willis

## MASTER ANGLER III

Roy Cook, Sr.
Michael Jones

## Creel Award

Mark Heatwole, Largemouth Bass (7), Smallmouth Bass (1), Blue Catfish (9), Chain Pickerel (4), Yellow Perch (41).

## EXPERTS

### Largemouth Bass

Richard Colgin
Tony Kennon, Sr.
Nelson Meador, Jr.
Stephen Miklandric
Michael Poskey
Jesse Redd
Charles Thomas

# Hall of Fame

Stephen Tucker
C. Greg Vick

**Smallmouth Bass**

William Miller
Mark Stevers
Matthew Sutphin
Lonnie Tiller

**Crappie**

Alex Ferrell
Garland Guill, Jr.
Gary Heflin, Sr.
Garry Kendrick, Sr.

**Rock Bass**

David Buskey
Edward Frye, Sr.
Jerry Johnson
Herbert McCann, III

**Sunfish**

Hunter Beagle
Steven Beagle
Samuel Bryan
Tommy Dooley
Harold Gore
Jerry Johnson
John Overton, Jr.
John Redd
L. A. Roberts
Howard Rollins
Richard Wilkinson
Earlie Worrell

**Channel Catfish**

Louise Dean
Paul Moore

**Blue Catfish**

Troy Barnes
William Barnes, Jr.
Jack Boles
Richard Brewer
Richard Burke
Jeffrey Carney
Paul Dellinger
Brian Dye
Robert Fenter
David Hall
Julian Hamlet
Dewey Hicks
David Hoffman, Sr.
Robert Holmes, Sr.
Theodore Kesler
Vernon Lawrence
Joey Lewanski
Gary Lewis
Robert Mitchell, Jr.
Robert Montry, Jr.
Matthew Nuckols
Larry Proffitt, Jr.
Steve Rice
Paul Rigney
Charles Smith
Lewis Stephens, Jr.
Jerry Thornton
Christopher Wells
William Wilbourne
Chris Williams

**Flathead Catfish**

Joey Hicks
Warren Kesterson
H. Steve Tollerson

**Rainbow Trout**

Chapman Billings
Charles Caldwell
David Carr
Gregg Clatterbaugh
Chip Coffman
Charles Crawford
Tony Dillard
Michael Driscoll, Sr.
David Dunn
Douglas Edwards
Bernard Epperly, Jr.
Michael Fink
Joshua Gaulke
Davie Goodloe
Donald Gunter
Kevin Hall
Zachary Hines
Michael Horgan
Jonathan Martin
Benny McAllister
Edward McAllister
Mark McClung, Jr.
Derek Norwinski
Glenn Perkins, Jr.
Richard Robertson, Sr.
Craig Russell
James Skidmore
Lee Stover
Donald Trantham, Jr.
Alec Turner

**Brook Trout**

Richard Akers, Jr.
Bill Barnes
Keith Cox
Bernard Epperly, Jr.
Bernard Harvey
Michael Horgan
Michael Kagey
Scotty O'Quinn
Julian Worley, Jr.

**Brown Trout**

Will Helmick

**Chain Pickerel**

Alex Ferrell
David Gerwitz
Alfred Haynes
Douglas McIlavy
Stephen Miklandric
Bill Schieman
Norman Waldron, Sr.

**Walleye**

Norman St. Martin

**Yellow Perch**

Walter Breeden
Antonio Cabacar, Sr.
Randall Campbell
Andrew Campbell
Mark Heatwole
Roland Horst
Robert Hurt
Anthony McLaughlin
John Miklandric
Michael Sclater
James Tyree, Sr.
Steven Waite
Norman Waldron, Sr.

**Carp**

Jeffery Beard

# 2004 Angler of the Year

| Species Size | Angler's Name/Home | Body of Water | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Largemouth Bass, 13 lbs. 6 oz., 27 1/2 ins. | Joseph Getz, Cartersville, VA | Briery Creek Lake | 08/01/2004 |
| Smallmouth Bass, 6 lbs. 8 oz., 22 1/4 ins. | Anthony Wiley, Narrows, VA | New River | 08/24/2004 |
| Crappie, 3 lbs. 10 oz., 16 ins. | Clabron Roberts, Jr., Verona, VA | Smith Mountain Lake | 05/22/2004 |
| Rock Bass, 2 lbs. 8 oz., 12 1/2 ins. | Clabron Roberts, Jr., Verona, VA | Bullpasture River | 07/29/2004 |
| Sunfish, 2 lbs. 8 oz., 16 ins. | Dallas Abernathy, Kenbridge, VA | Fort Pickett Reservoir | 04/24/2004 |
| Sunfish, 2 lbs. 8 oz., 13 1/4 ins. | Clabron Roberts, Jr., Verona, VA | Bullpasture River | 06/14/2004 |
| White Bass, 3 lbs. 7 oz., 19 ins. | Charles Clear, Meadowview, VA | South Holston Reservoir | 03/29/2004 |
| Striped Bass, 40 lbs. 4 oz., 43 1/2 ins. | Douglas Biggs, Bracey, VA | Lake Gaston | 05/03/2004 |
| White Perch, 1 lb. 12 oz. | Shawn Jacobs, Fredericksburg, VA | Private Pond | 02/23/2004 |
| Channel Catfish, 28 lbs. 0 oz, 39 1/2 ins. | Anthony Davis, Richmond, VA | James River | 03/06/2004 |
| Channel Catfish, 28 lbs. 0 oz., 38 ins. | John Ketchum, Luray, VA | Shenandoah River | 04/22/2004 |
| Blue Catfish, 92 lbs. 4 oz., 51 ins. | William Zost, Roxboro, NC | Buggs Island Lake | 06/29/2004 |
| Flathead Catfish, 48 lbs. 0 oz. , 54 ins. | Edward Lipscomb, Jr., Rustburg, VA | Dan River | 05/12/2004 |
| Rainbow Trout, 14 lbs. 0 oz., 31ins. | Wade Harold, Monterey, VA | Jackson River | 07/09/2004 |
| Brook Trout, 4 lbs. 14 oz., 19 ins. | Anthony Showker, New Hope, VA | Big Pine | 07/04/2004 |
| Brown Trout, 14 lbs., 12 oz., 32 ins. | Curtis Johnson, Pearisburg, VA | Cripple Creek | 01/18/2004 |
| Chain Pickerel, 7 lbs. 2 oz., 27 1/2 ins. | Charles Faris, Jr., Mechanicsville, VA | Private Pond | 03/23/2004 |
| Muskellunge, 29 lbs. 10 oz., 49 ins. | William Robertson, Pembroke, VA | New River | 07/01/2004 |
| Northern Pike, 10 lbs., 8 oz., 36 ins. | James Smith, Staunton, VA | North River | 08/28/2004 |
| Walleye, 11 lbs. 14 oz., 33 1/4 ins. | Mitchell Funk, Sr., Fries, VA | New River | 07/18/2004 |
| Yellow Perch, 2 lbs. 6 oz., 15 1/2 ins. | E. G. Totty, Jr., Chesterfield, VA | Mattaponi River | 03/04/2004 |
| Gar, 18 lbs. 0 oz., 48 ins. | Stormy Cline, Gretna, VA | James River | 07/04/2004 |
| Bowfin, 16 lbs. 8 oz., 35 ins. | John Plyler, Jr., Newsom, VA | Lake Cohoon | 10/17/2004 |
| Carp, 44 lbs. 0 oz., 44 ins. | Kevin Walker, Petersburg, VA | Private Pond | 07/10/2004 |

**Please Note:** For record keeping purposes, please report any errors on your Trophy Fish Awards. If you discover an error, please contact the Virginia Angler Recognition Program at 804-367-1293 or write to: VARP, 4010 W. Broad St. Richmond, VA 23230. You can find all you need to know about the Trophy Fish Program at www.dgif.virginia.gov.

# RECIPES

by Joan Cone

## Inexpensive Virginia Saltwater Fish

You do not need to purchase costly fish to enjoy a first-rate seafood dinner. Such varieties as croaker, bluefish, Spanish mackerel and sea trout are available at reasonable prices in season.

When you purchase fresh fish, look for bright eyes, firm flesh and no strong "fishy" odor. If convenient, poke the fish gently with your finger to be sure it is firm. If possible, fish should be cooked the day of purchase. Otherwise keep refrigerated until the next day.

Menu

*Saucy Fillets*
*Baked Potatoes With Blue Cheese*
*(For Microwave)*
*Green Beans And Tomatoes*
*Spinach And Bacon Salad*
*Banana Blueberry Mini Loaves*

### Saucy Fillets

1 1/4 pounds saltwater fillets
Release Non-Stick Aluminum Foil
Margarine or butter softened
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon catsup
1 teaspoon prepared mustard

Place fillets on foil on top of broiler pan. Spread margarine on each fillet. Place fillets under broiler for about 5 minutes. Combine mayonnaise, catsup and mustard.Top each fillet with mixture and spread over fillet. Place under broiler and broil 5 to 6 minutes or until sauce is lightly browned. Serves 4.

### Baked Potatoes With Blue Cheese

4 8-ounce baking potatoes
1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese
3/4 cup sour cream
2 scallions chopped

Pierce each potato once through the skin in the center. Wrap each potato in a microwave safe paper towel and arrange them end to end in a circle, about 1 inch apart. Bake on HIGH for 18 to 22 minutes. Let stand, wrapped, 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine blue cheese and sour cream and mix to blend well. Cut potato open and fluff with fork. Top with blue cheese and sour cream and garnish with chopped scallions. Serves 4.

### Green Beans and Tomatoes

3 cups hot cooked green beans (1 pound)
2 plum tomatoes, cut into thin wedges
1/4 cup Italian reduced fat dressing
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or
1/2 teaspoon dried basil

Toss all ingredients in large bowl. Makes 4 to 5 servings.

### Spinach and Bacon Salad

1/3 cup red wine vinaigrette reduced fat dressing
6 cups packed torn spinach leaves
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion rings (optional)
2 tablespoons real bacon pieces

Microwave dressing in microwavable bowl on HIGH 30 to 50 seconds or until hot. Pour over combined spinach, mushrooms and onion in large bowl; toss to coat. Sprinkle with bacon. Makes 4 servings.

### Banana Blueberry Mini Loaves

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 cup (3 medium) mashed ripe bananas
1/2 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries (do not thaw)

Heat oven to 350° F. Grease and flour bottoms only of three 6 x 3 1/2-inch loaf pans. In large bowl, beat together sugar and oil. Add bananas, sour cream, vanilla and eggs; blend well. Add flour, baking soda and salt and stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Gently stir in blueberries. Pour into greased and floured pans. Bake at 350° F. for 40 to 50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 5 minutes; remove from pans. Cool completely. Wrap tightly and store in refrigerator.
These can be frozen for later use or given as gifts. Yield 3 (12-slice) loaves.

Virginia's Finest

# On The Water

by Jim Crosby

## First Aid Needs Afloat

One important safety item often left ashore is the boat first aid kit. Having one available when the need arises can save the day and maybe extend the cruise as opposed to having to go ashore for treatment or other resources.

Boat first aid kits have enjoyed some of the same technological advances as many other items on our vessels. For example, they are packaged for use according to the type of boating we enjoy—day use, weekenders, long-term cruises and live-aboards. You can even buy one for ocean cruising where professional medical services may be well beyond your reach for extended periods of time.

The latest thing is to start with a soft-sided bag because a hard case to house your first aid kit can itself do some damage aboard a bucking and jumping watercraft. I can remember when most first aid kits came in a metal box and after a season in the marine environment, the hinges became so rusted, you couldn't get them open. The next step was to house them in plastic cases—a definite improvement however; you can't beat the nylon bags they use today. Some of these even have flotation so they won't sink away from you when you and/or they end up in the water.

I settled for the weekender because it appeared to cover the majority of my boating. It came with the usual assortment of adhesive bandage strips, some compresses, tape, and an antiseptic but in an unusual packaging. The bag has six clear zip lock type baggies labeled:

1. CPR/Drowning/Choking
2. Stop Bleeding/Shock
3. Wounds/Cuts/Care
4. Fractures/Sprains
5. Medications/Stings
6. Burns/Blisters/Abrasions

Each packet contains the instructions and necessary items for each particular problem—wow, what organization. In addition, it contains *"A Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness and Marine Medicine"* and *"An Illustrated Guide to Life Threatening Emergencies"* both written by Dr. Eric A. Weiss for Adventure Medical Kits in Oakland, California. Dr. Weiss is the Associate Director of Trauma and an emergency physician at the Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto. He is also on the Board of Directors of the Wilderness Medical Society and serves as a medical consultant to The National Geographic Society, U.S. Army Special Forces and The American Red Cross.

How could you have anything better working for you in an emergency situation? I got all that for around $30 and the kit included good, useable scissors and tweezers. Based on 25 years running on a rescue squad, the only item I added was a Laerdal Pocket Mask for performing mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing. This whole package comes in a nylon bag that measures 8 inches long, 6 inches high and 4 inches deep. The whole package is manufactured by Adventure Medical Kits, and in this case, for West Marine. They can be found in most marine supply stores like BoatU.S, West Marine, Overton's and Cabela's.

The only other thing I can recommend to you to be fully prepared for Murphy's Law is to take an American Red Cross First Aid/CPR Class. Of course, all this is based on the fact that no skipper is going out on his boat without a flashlight and if that is likely, you should add a mini-light to your own first aid kit. When administering first aid, a flashlight is useful even in the daytime.

One last thought is any prescription medications you could possibly need while on the water. Severe allergies, heart maladies, breathing problems and motion sickness can always become a problem where specific medications can offer relief. This is worth mentioning to your passengers before leaving the dock. Meds left in the car or at home cannot be of use on the water. □

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*It's important to regularly check your first aid kit to make sure it contains a good selection of needed items and that they are in good working condition.*

# Naturally Wild

story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

## White Catfish
### *Ameiurus (Ictalurus) catus*

Excluding the bullheads, the white catfish is the smallest of our catfish. It is bluish-gray on its back, gray on its sides, olive-gray on its head and white or creamy on its undersides. Sometimes the white shows as wormy markings into the bluish-gray sides. Its tail is moderately forked. It can best be identified by the 19 to 23 soft rays on its anal fin. Channel cats have 24 to 29 and blue cats more than 30.

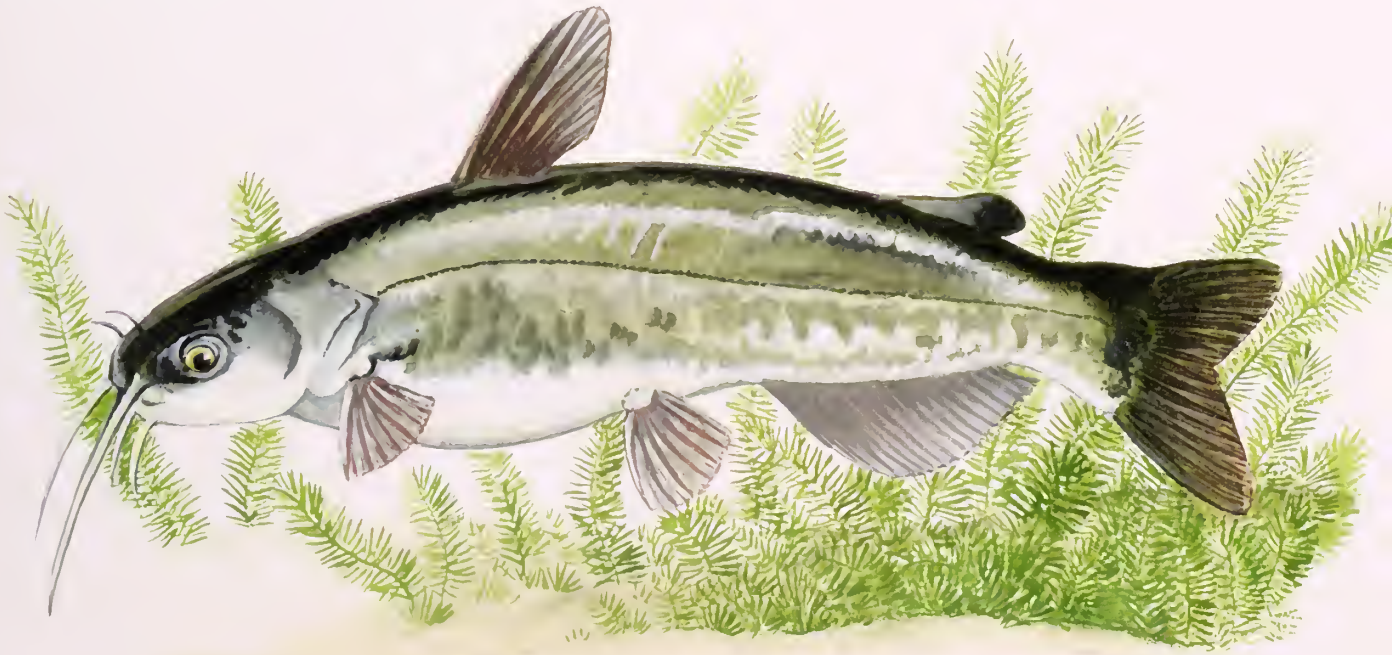
White cats are slower growing than other catfish. This catfish averages 8 to 18 inches long, and up to 1½ pounds. The state record is 7 pounds, 6 ounces taken out of Western Branch. The world record is 18.88 pounds caught in Florida.

White catfish are found in fresh and slightly brackish waters from New York to Florida. In Virginia, they are found mainly in coastal rivers, slow-moving streams or pools in streams, ponds and lakes; tending to favor silt-bottomed areas. The Potomac, Rappahannock and York drainages of the Coastal Plain, and the James and Roanoke Rivers into the Piedmont contain white catfish.

They spawn in early summer, cleaning away areas and forming saucer-shaped nests 30 to 36 inches in diameter, quite large for a fish its size. They even carry sticks or stones in their mouths to add to it. They mature at age two and when water temperatures reach about 70 degrees, the female will lay anywhere from 1200 to 4000 adhesive eggs, depending on her size. Both sexes guard the nest until the young hatch.

Like most catfish, they are omnivorous feeding on about anything, dead or alive. This includes other fish, especially gizzard and threadfin shad, and other small fish, insect larvae and aquatic plants. They are not as totally nocturnal as other cats and start feeding at dusk into dark. The younger catfish feed mainly on aquatic insects.

White catfish are caught by both sport anglers and commercial fishermen. They are caught on minnows, worms, stink and cheese baits and cut bait just like other cats. Commercially they are taken in pound nets, trap nets, fyke nets and trotlines. □



# Virginia Wildlife Magazine

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